

**Ambassador's remarks at the inauguration of World  
Dance Day Celebrations**

**Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre, Budapest**

**5 May 2026**

*Distinguished Guests, Talented Artists, and Dear Friends  
of India and Hungary,*

Good evening, *Jó estét kívánok.*

It is an absolute honor and a profound joy to welcome you all to the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre this evening as we gather to celebrate World Dance Day. Today, we do not merely witness a sequence of performances; we are here to partake in a universal celebration of rhythm, movement, and the indomitable human spirit. Dance is, perhaps, the most primal and yet the most sophisticated language known to humanity. It is a language that requires no translation, for it speaks directly to the soul, transcending the artificial boundaries of geography, language, and nationality.

In India, dance is not merely a form of entertainment; it is a profound spiritual discipline, an act of devotion, and a living repository of our ancient civilizational ethos. The Natya Shastra, the foundational Indian

treatise on the performing arts dating back millennia, describes dance as a divine creation—a complete art form that encompasses drama, music, rhythm, and expression. To look at the classical dances of India is to look at a kaleidoscope of India’s tremendous cultural diversity. India is not a monolith; it is a magnificent mosaic of languages, landscapes, and traditions, and this breathtaking plurality is perfectly mirrored in our performing arts.

This evening, we are privileged to witness three of India’s resplendent classical dance forms, each hailing from a different corner of our vast country, each bringing its own unique flavor, history, and aesthetic. We will experience the geometric precision, the statuesque postures, and the deep, expressive storytelling of **Bharatanatyam**, a majestic art form born in the ancient temples of southern India. We will be enchanted by the lyrical grace, the fluid torso movements, and the sculptural beauty of **Odissi**, which carries the rhythmic ocean waves of India’s eastern coast in its very steps. And we will be captivated by the mesmerizing spins, the intricate footwork, and the poetic storytelling of **Kathak**, which flourished in the grand courts and vibrant cities of northern India.

Yet, the classical traditions are but one half of India’s dancing soul. The other half thrives in the fields, the

courtyards, and the village squares. It is in the earthy, unbridled energy of our folk and popular traditions that the heartbeat of the Indian masses truly resides.

Tonight, we will journey from the classical to the popular, experiencing the infectious, agrarian exuberance of **Punjab** in the north, where the dhol drum commands the feet to move, and the raw, vibrant, and immensely rhythmic popular dances of **Tamil Nadu** in the deep south. These forms remind us that dance in India is intrinsically linked to the cycles of nature, the celebration of the harvest, and the joy of community life.

However, culture is not static; it is a flowing river, constantly interacting, absorbing, and evolving. The beauty of this evening's program lies not just in the preservation of heritage, but in the thrilling possibilities of artistic synthesis. You will witness a magnificent fusion of Indian classical dance forms, where Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Kathak engage in a beautiful, rhythmic dialogue, demonstrating that despite their distinct regional vocabularies, they are rooted in the same profound spiritual and aesthetic grammar.

Even more exhilarating is an experiment we are immensely proud to present tonight: a never-before-attempted fusion of Indian classical dance and the fiery,

passionate art of **Flamenco**. This is an encounter that is historically and artistically profound. The roots of Flamenco are deeply intertwined with the historic migration of the Roma people from the plains of northern India centuries ago. When you watch the rapid *tatkar*—the rhythmic footwork of Kathak—and compare it to the *zapateado* of Flamenco, when you see the intricate, expressive hand movements of the Spanish dancers and the *mudras* of the Indian artist, you are witnessing the reunion of distant cousins. It is an educative and electrifying reminder of how our cultures have historically traversed continents, intertwining to create new vocabularies of beauty.

This spirit of connection brings us to our wonderful host country, Hungary. Tonight, the stage will also be graced by a vibrant **Hungarian folk dance**. If you observe closely, you will find a remarkable, unspoken kinship between the folk traditions of Hungary and those of India. Whether it is the intricate group formations, the swirling of the vibrant skirts, the pride in the posture, or the sheer communal joy of moving in unison to a galloping rhythm, the folk dances of our two nations speak the same emotional dialect. They are born from a shared love for the land, a shared resilience, and a shared understanding that joy is meant to be expressed collectively.

It is entirely fitting that we celebrate this synthesis here at the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre. Amrita Sher-Gil herself—born in Budapest to a Hungarian mother and an Indian father—is the ultimate embodiment of the cultural confluence between our two nations. She bridged the East and the West through her canvas, just as our dancers tonight will bridge them through their movement. Culture, my friends, is the most powerful diplomatic tool we possess. While politics and economics navigate the complexities of the mind, culture touches the heart. It dissolves prejudices, fosters mutual respect, and brings people together in a shared experience of beauty.

The promotion, preservation, and global dissemination of this rich cultural tapestry are matters of paramount importance to the Government of India. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, there has been a passionate and structured renaissance in how India engages with its own heritage and how it presents that heritage to the world. Guided by the philosophy of "***Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi***"—meaning Development as well as Heritage—the Government of India is committed to ensuring that our ancient arts not only survive but thrive on the global stage.

Through the tireless efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR),

India has expanded its cultural footprint immensely. From providing extensive scholarships to foreign students to study Indian dance and music in India, to supporting cultural centers like this one to bring top-tier Indian artists to audiences worldwide, the Government is actively democratizing access to Indian arts. Prime Minister Modi's vision of our heritage is inherently experiential; it is about moving beyond mere narration to actual immersion. Just as the world has embraced Yoga as a holistic practice for the mind and body, there is a concerted, structural effort to share the healing, joyful, and deeply spiritual practice of Indian dance with the global community.

As we prepare to be enthralled by tonight's performances, I invite you to open your hearts to the immersive experience our artists have curated. Let the complex rhythms of the *tabla* the infectious beat of the *dhol*, and the stamping of the Flamenco and Hungarian dancers wash over you. Let us celebrate the artists whose years of rigorous discipline, sweat, and devotion have made this evening possible.

Dance is the joy of existence translated into movement. It is a celebration that we are alive, that we are together, and that despite the vastness of our world, we share a common, beating heart.

With immense pride in our shared heritage and great anticipation for the spectacle that awaits us, I am delighted to officially inaugurate the World Dance Day Celebrations at the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre.

Thank you, *Köszönöm szépen*, and please enjoy the performances!